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ON THE AUTHORSHIP
OF THE
SONNETS

ATTRIBUTED TO SHAKESPEARE.

*An enquiry into the respective claims of Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney
and others to be their Author.*

BY

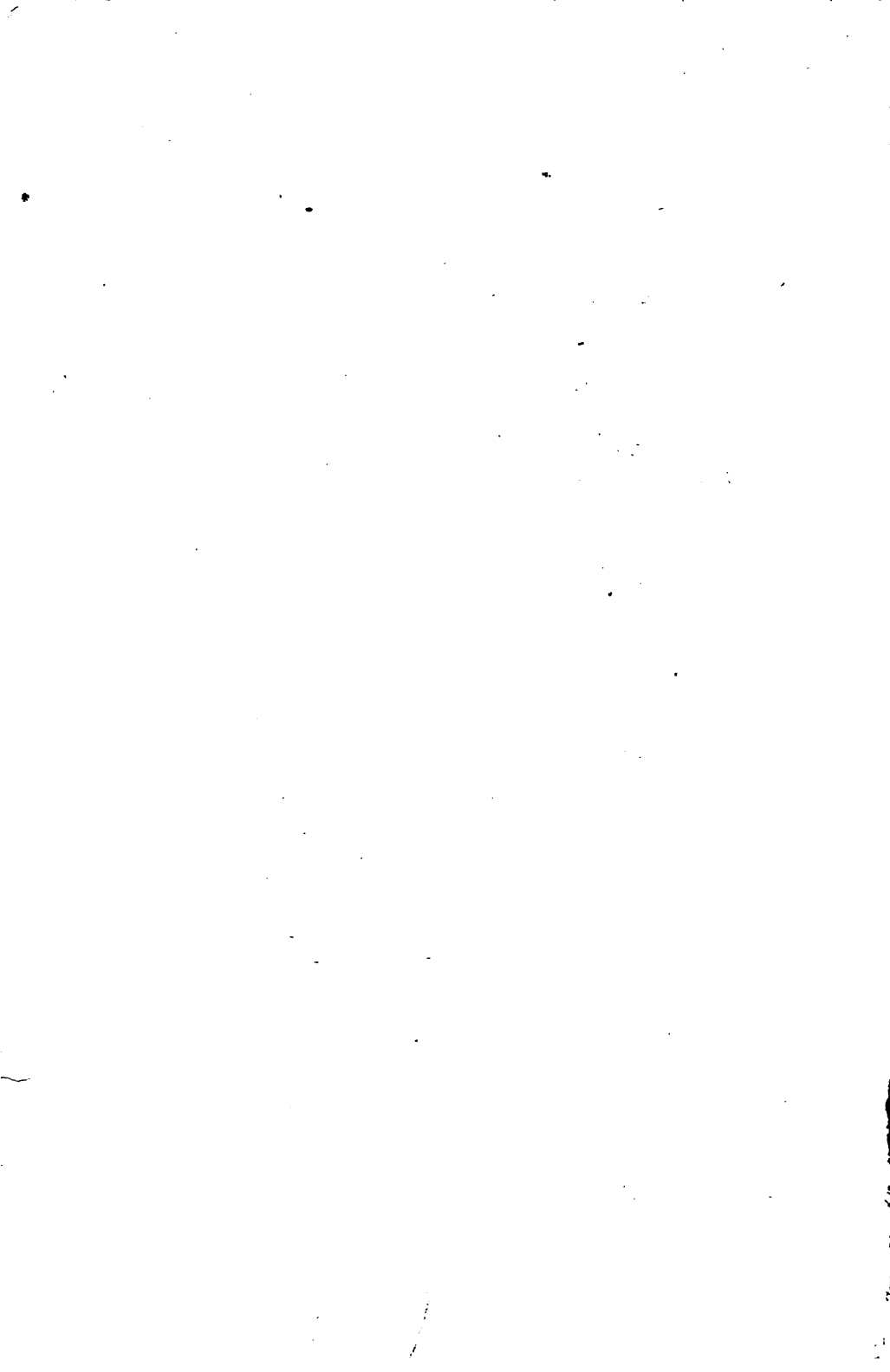
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ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

"It has been truly said that when the human will is strongly disposed to ignore the practical consequences of a fact, it has a subtle and most unlimited power of blinding the intellect, even to the most elementary laws of evidence."—GERALD MASSEY.

THE above words express what is generally accepted as a truism where Religion or Politics are concerned, but they are equally true in particular cases of purely literary criticism or exegesis, as for example, the Authorship of the Plays or Poems vulgarly attributed to Shakespeare, where the desire to arrive at the truth, is too generally made quite subordinate to the defence of a cherished conclusion.

In *Baconiana* for May and October, 1892, and May, 1893, are three papers by H. Stotsenburgh, on the Authorship of the Sonnets attributed to Shakespeare. In the August number of *Baconiana* for 1893, is a paper on the same subject, by C. M. P.; and in the November number of the same year, another paper, by Mr. W. Henry Burr. In the February number of 1891, there is another paper on the Sonnets, by R. M. T.

It is now my intention to consider the arguments of the above writers, and how far they have succeeded in proving who really wrote the "Sonnets" in question. Mrs. Pott, Mr. Burr, and Mr. R. M. Theobald (to drop the thin veil of initials), all advocate the *Baconian* Authorship of the Sonnets, while Mr. Stotsenburgh holds them to have been written by Sir Philip Sidney, which view I consider to be the correct one. Mrs. Pott not only considers that Bacon wrote the Sonnets, but that the "*Sonnets were not written to any living person!*"

"Truly, they are an epithalmium, or bridal song, in praise of the union of truth and beauty, or if you will, of art and nature,

philosophy and poetry, mind and spirit, of things material and things celestial, that mingling 'earth with heaven' at which Bacon ever aimed in all that he did, wrote or attempted." Now I profoundly dissent from this fantastic conclusion as to the object of the Sonnets, and concur fully with the following remarks of Mr. R. M. Theobald (l.c. p. 181), "I do not find that the transcendental explanations which have been offered, can be easily *fitted to the details* of the Sonnets. It is indeed possible that the Poet's wooing may in some of the stanzas refer to Truth or Beauty or Art, his own art, or universal art. When, however, the poet is not praising but *dispraising* his mistress or the subject of his verse, as in Sonnets 130, 131, 137, and many of the later Sonnets, I cannot with such limited vision as I possess, find any transcendental key that fits the intricacies of their structure." Passing over therefore the opening pages of Mrs. Pott's paper, where one has to pick one's way among the clouds, the first critical argument is reached when we are informed (p 78) that "there are in the Sonnets 770 figures, metaphors and similes" The lady's ideas, however, of *metaphor* seem a little confused, as she describes the "Sun rising behind the mountains of *knowledge*" though it would seem more correct metaphorically speaking, to regard the mountains, over which the sun climbs, before it can diffuse its light, as rather emblematic of *ignorance*, as "*knowledge*" can hardly be considered as an obstacle to light!

Of this appalling army of 770 metaphors Mrs. Pott remarks "Baconians will find that they *harmonize absolutely* with Bacon's scientific observations, and with his use of the same figures in his speeches and prose writings."

The value of this argument depends of course on how far it tallies with *facts*, and unfortunately only 35 references are given to the Sonnets and none whatever to the works of Bacon. An examination however of the above slender list leads to the conclusion that this lady has acted not injudiciously, in not more particularly referring to Bacon's works, as many of the words are such, as parallels might be found for in any voluminous writer subjected to a criticism as strained and fantastic as that whereby a link is sought to be seated between the Sonnets and the acknowledged works of Bacon. A few examples will suffice to illustrate Mrs. Pott's method of constructing metaphors and discovering allusions.

METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN THE SONNETS.

"GRAVITATION" (earth's centre) with a reference to Sonnet 146. The reference is:—

"Poor soul, the *centre* of my *sinful earth*."

Here "*my sinful earth*" clearly designates the writer's body of which his "*poor soul*" is the centre. Mrs. Pott changes this to Earth's centre, which involves a complete change of sense, and then leaves us to connect her new version, with any references to "*Gravitation*" which the works of Bacon may contain! Bacon died 12 years before Newton was born!

Another entry is "Of ANGELS," with a reference to Sonnet 144, in which the word Angel occurs several times, and is also to be found in Bacon's works no doubt, but the metaphorical use of the word Angel does not go far to prove community of authorship!

"RHETORIC" is also given with a reference to Sonnet 82, where the word occurs thus. "What strained touches Rhetoric can lend," but Metaphor or simile there is none. Another Metaphor cited is "EBB and FLOW of the sea" with a reference to Sonnet 60.

"Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end."

Here there is no metaphor of any *ebbing* and *flowing*, but of the *continuous onward flow* of the minutes of our life, as the waves make constantly for the shore. The metaphor is a fine one and is really Homer's, borrowed by the Author of the Sonnets, but spoiled by Mrs. Pott imparting into it the idea of "*ebbing*." Homer's metaphor is as follows:

"As onward to the sounding shore the waves come rolling fast,
Each following in the other's wake 'neath the North-Western blast;
Far out at sea they first are seen careering o'er the main,
But nearer as they reach the land they strength and fury gain,
And soon encountering with the sea-girt rocks which bar their way
They burst in sheafs of foam, and cast on every side the spray;
So onward swept the ceaseless tide of Danaans to the fray"

Iliad iv, 422.

Again, "DENSE AND RARE" is given with a reference to Sonnet 45. The only allusion in this Sonnet that can be twisted into any reference to dense and rare is "slight air and purging fire;" but it is absurd to argue that so common place an allusion can identify Bacon as the author especially as the *catch-words* "dense and rare" do not occur in the Sonnet.

LEGAL TERMS IN THE SONNETS.

As a profound acquaintance with law and the correct application of its technical phrases, so remarkable in the Plays, has proved such an effective argument to support the claim of Bacon to be their author, Mrs. Pott seeks to apply the same argument to the Sonnets, and gives a list of no less than 88 "*law terms*" as she calls them. This list whittles down, however, on examination to 7 only, viz: *Arrest without bail, Attaint, Bonds determinate, Deed of Separation, Impanelled, Misprision, and Proving Succession*, which do not go far to prove any exceptional legal knowledge in the author.

as they certainly fall within the compass of any *gentleman's* attainments of that day. The remaining 81 words are made up of such "*law terms*" (!) as the following:— Advocate, Bail, Bankrupt, Censures, Dates, Debate, Debtor, Estimate, Gaol, Interim, Patents, Quietus, Ransom, Rents, Scope, Tenants, Usher, Usury, Verdict, Witness, which absolutely prove nothing as regard *legal knowledge* whatever. In Sir Philip Sidney's works, however, we find such legal phrases as prove him to have had as much legal knowledge as the author of the Sonnets, that is, as was ordinarily possessed by gentlemen of his period. As for example, *Demur, Disprove title, Make indentures, Seized of the Crown, Quest, impanelled, Put interrogatories, Bar to plead, &c.* So far then as the legal argument goes Sidney's claim is as good as Bacon's.

ANTITHETA.

Of these Mrs. Pott writes "Baconians will not fail to recognise these "Antitheta" as *peculiarly characteristic of his* (Bacon's) *works; they constitute not so much a point of style as a part of his method," &c.*

A list then follows of 91 "Antitheta" from the Sonnets, which however may be met by a similar list from Astrophel and Stella alone of 118 examples, a strong argument, so far as style and language goes for considering the Poem and Sonnets to have been written by the same man. On this point I will quote a short passage from Gerald Massey's work: "The secret drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets," p. 71; "The earliest Sonnets on marriage could not have been written *until after Shakespeare had read the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney.* So great is the likeness between Sidney's writing and Shakespeare's Sonnets, that Sir Walter Scott fancied these must have been read by Sidney. The likeness remains, but the facts were just reversed by him. Shakespeare not Sidney was the borrower. He has adopted plea after plea, and argument after argument in favour of marriage, and taken the greater part of his subject matter for the first 12 or 13 Sonnets from Sidney's 'Arcadia.'"

Bearing this in mind it will be less matter of surprise to find that the Poem of Sidney yields more examples than the Sonnets, and that (which is more important) no work of Bacon within an equal compass yields a number comparable therewith!

ANTITHETA IN ASTROPHEL AND STELLA.

<i>Absence, presence</i> 60	<i>Alone in company</i> 27
<i>Alive, dead</i> Song 5	<i>Annoys, joys</i> 44
<i>All is well while I paint</i>	<i>Balance, sword</i> 75
<i>Hell</i> 2	<i>Balm, woe</i> 39

NOTE.—The numbers refer to the Stanzas.

<i>Begins, endeth</i> ...	Song 1	<i>I willing run, yet while</i>	
<i>Black, bright</i> ...	7	<i>I run repent</i> ...	19
<i>Black, white</i> ...	70	<i>Joy, shame</i> ...	28
<i>Blind to light</i> ...	39	<i>Life to them that living</i>	
<i>Blissed in my curse</i> ...	60	<i>die</i> ...	32
<i>Busy day, silent night</i> ...	89	<i>Live, dieth</i> ...	Song 1
<i>Closed up some opened</i>		<i>Lively, deadly</i> ...	32
<i>sense</i> ...	38	<i>Living, dying</i> ...	Song 8
<i>Cruel words, praises</i> ...	Song 5	<i>Love me not, love me</i>	
<i>Cupid, chastity</i> ...	35	<i>more</i> ...	62
<i>Cursed in my bliss</i> ...	60	<i>March, May</i> ...	21
<i>Curst, blest</i> ...	16	<i>Me, you</i> ...	89
<i>Daintiest lustre, beamy</i>		<i>More blessed, more</i>	
<i>black</i> ...	7	<i>wretched</i> ...	24
<i>Dark hearts, living light</i> ...	77	<i>More foolish, more wise</i> ...	33
<i>Darkness, clear</i> ...	57	<i>My pains, me rejoice</i> ...	57
<i>Dazzle, delight</i> ...	7	<i>My woes, my joy</i> ...	Song 5
<i>Deaf to noise</i> ...	39	<i>Naked show, in grace</i>	
<i>Dear, wounds</i> ...	6	<i>arrayed</i> ...	55
<i>Death in birth</i> ...	50	<i>New found hopes, prob-</i>	
<i>Decks and staineth</i> ...	Song 1	<i>lems old</i> ...	3
<i>Devil, angel</i> ...	Song 5	<i>Open can, can lock-up</i> ...	Song 5
<i>Dumb swans, chattering</i>		<i>Outward part, heart</i> ...	11
<i>pies</i> ...	54	<i>Pain doth learn delight</i> ...	48
<i>Fair, disgrace</i> ...	103	<i>Pleasure, pain</i> ...	1
<i>Fair, storms</i> ...	6	<i>Poor man's wealth</i> ...	39
<i>Fiercest, fairest</i> ...	Song 9	<i>Prisoner's release</i> ...	39
<i>Fierce love, tender hate</i> ...	60	<i>Quick in brain thoughts</i>	
<i>Fire, cold</i> ...	30	<i>in virtue lame</i> ...	21
<i>Fools or overwise</i> ...	23	<i>Red and white</i> ...	9
<i>Free, born a slave</i> ...	47	<i>Restless, rest</i> ...	Song 8
<i>Foes, lovers</i> ...	Song 5	<i>Royal blood in rural vein</i> ...	6
<i>Freezing, fires</i> ...	6	<i>Rude force, sweetest</i>	
<i>Fresh, sun-burned</i> ...	1	<i>sovereignty</i> ...	71
<i>Friendly, foe</i> ...	21	<i>Say, not say</i> ...	35
<i>Fruitful, sun-burned</i> ...	1	<i>Sauciness, courtesy</i> ...	83
<i>Heavenly, hellish</i> ...	6	<i>Saucy love, humble I</i> ...	73
<i>Heaven's joy, sad rhymes</i> ...	70	<i>Sense, love</i> ...	10
<i>Heart most high, eyes</i>		<i>Shade, day</i> ...	89
<i>most low</i> ...	63	<i>Silence, music</i> ...	70
<i>Help, oppress</i> ...	Song 5	<i>Skies, ditch</i> ...	19
<i>High, low</i> ...	26 39	<i>Small, great</i> ...	Song 3
<i>His own joy, his own</i>		<i>Servant's shame, masters</i>	
<i>hurt</i> ...	78	<i>blame</i> ...	107
<i>Hopes, begot by fear</i> ...	6	<i>Smile, weep</i> ...	70
<i>I am, not I</i> ...	45	<i>Sorrow, joy</i> ...	100
<i>I curse, I pity</i> ...	46	<i>Soul, sense</i> ...	61
<i>Infernal night, heavenly</i>		<i>Sour-breathed, sugared</i> ...	59
<i>day</i> ...	33	<i>Speak and not be heard</i> ...	34

<i>Stop nor start</i> 23	<i>Weak lords, mighty kings</i> 29
<i>Sweet comedy, unsuited</i>	<i>While they make love</i>
<i>speed</i> 51	<i>conquer, conquer love</i> 42
<i>Sweet, cruel</i> 48	<i>When most I glory,</i>
<i>Sweet reward, sharpest</i>	<i>then feel I most shame</i> 19
<i>pain</i> 48	<i>Which loosest fasteth</i>
<i>Sweet, poison</i> Song 5	<i>tieth</i> Song 1
<i>Take and give</i> 75	<i>Will; wit</i> 4
<i>Tears, no tears</i> 100	<i>Winter night, summer day</i> 89
<i>Tender, hard</i> 4	<i>Wise men, fond ware</i> ... 34
<i>The more I cry, less grace</i> 44	<i>Without fuel, hot fire</i> ... 46
<i>To be if they be not</i> Song 7	<i>Woes, joy</i> 108
<i>Tretles high, bases deep</i> 70	<i>Wooed woe, ravishing</i>
<i>Venus, chastity</i> 42	<i>delight</i> 58
<i>Venus, Dian</i> 72	<i>Word, deed</i> 66
<i>Virtue, love</i> 52	<i>Worse, good</i> 18
<i>Warm, cold</i> 30	<i>Wound, heal</i> 79

As Sidney's Poem moreover is not so long as the Sonnets, as regards the number of words it contains, Mrs. Pott's argument should prove that Bacon wrote it also, which is absurd ! Q.E.D.

COMPOUND WORDS.

Mrs. Pott then remarks "There are more than 70 of the compound words, which at one time *Bacon so much affected.*" Now omitting some words in familiar use, as *Cherry-tree*, *Cross-bow*, *Prayer-book*, *Son-in-law*, *to-day*, and the like, the number of compound words stands as follows. In the Sonnets 81; in Bacon's "Essays," "Advancement of Learning," "Wisdom of the Ancients," and the "New Atlantis," 158; whilst in Sidney's "Defence of Poetry" "Poems" and "Arcadia," no less than 450 are met with. Whatever evidence therefore may be deduced from *compound words* is entirely in favour of Sidney, as these compound words were far more characteristic of Sidney's style than of Bacon's.

ALLITERATION. REPETITIONS.

Under this head Mrs. Pott writes "Another youthful trick of Francis Bacon was that which in 'Love's Labour Lost' is called 'affecting the letter' or as we now say 'alliteration.'" Mrs. Pott then gives from the Sonnets a list of 32 instances of this trick, and adds "and there are *repeated words*, (27) which have been considered peculiar to the Shakespeare Plays, but which are equally to be found in Bacon's prose," making in all 59 of these two classes in the Sonnets. Unfortunately for the lady's argument, both alliteration and repetition of words are far more a peculiarity of the style of Sidney than of Bacon, or the author of the Plays,

as the following list from *Astrophel and Stella* is sufficient to prove, amounting to 107 in all. The figures give the stanza in which the quotation occurs. A *praise* to *praise*, when thou art *praised*, 35; *Beauty* but *beauty* is, 47; *Begone, begone*, I say, 11th Song; Be joys whose joys, 42; *Brabbling be*, 10; But God *wot, wot not*, 74; By her I love and lack, 105; *Baiting-place*—balm, 39; Best *graced grace*, 82; *Beauty* is *sick*, but *sick*, 101; *Beauty beautifies* 100. *Black beams so bright*, 7; *Black beams burning*, 47. *Blackest brook*, 74; By *praise*, but *praise*, 35; Come *Sleep, O Sleep*, 39; *Do not, O do not*, 42; For *grammar* says, to *grammat who* says nay, 63; *Fools*, if they be not *fools*, 7th Song; *Fortune* of thy *fortune*, 33; *Hap more high*, 4th Song; *Heaven's course* or *heaven's* inside, 10; *Harder judges, judge*, 23; Hear *with patience*, and *with patience* bid, 56; Her *heart, sweet heart*, 44; Her *flesh*, his *food*, 29; Her *grace, gracious* makes, 12; *Honour* is *honoured*, 35; I saw and *liked*, I *liked*, 2; *I, I, OI*, 69; In *sweetest strength* so *sweetly*, 36; Judge of *love*, feelest a *lover's* case, 31; Kill this *killing care*, 68; Look here, I say, I *looked*, 53; *Love*, to be *loved*, 31; *Love, I burn*, I *burn* in *love*, 59; *Love* me not, *love* me more, 62; *Love's* self, there doth *love*, 43; *Lover's* scorn, *love* doth possess, 31; Make *speech* of *speech* arise, 27; *Mars* could yet *mad mars*, 75; *Me to thee, thee to me*, 4th Song; *Mortal mixture*, 5; *Muddy minds*, 7th Song; My *horse*, a *horse* to *love*, 49; My *mouth* to say my *mouth*, 80; Naming my *Stella's name*, 35; *Needs must* miss, *needs must* smart, 46; *No force, no fraud*, 33; Not thou by *praise*, but *praise*, 35; Of that *best*, thou leavest the *best*, 11; *O tears*, no *tears*, 100; Only with *pains*, my *pains*, 93; This *paper* pale despair, and *pain* his *pen* doth move, 6; *Pity* win, and *pity* grace, 1; *Pleasure* of my *pain*, 1; *Poisoned* with *poison*, 16; Prancing on the *press*, 53; *Rage* now rules the *reins*, 5th Song; *Reason* good, *good reason*, 10; *Restless rest*, 8th Song; *Resty race*, 80; *Rich* in the *riches* of a *royal* heart, 37; *Running* in *rattling* rows, 15; *She, dear she*, 1; *Simple soul*, 4; *Smooth* pillows, *sweetest* bed, 39; So *sweet* is the most *sweetly*, 57; So *sweet* sounds *straight* 55; So *sweets* my *pain* that my *pains*, 57; *Sweetest strength* so *sweetly*, 36; So *still* so *Stella*, 54; *Sad* words, *saddest* sense, 87; *Spite* of *spite*, 59; *Sweet* fair, *fair* *sweet*, 82; *Sweetness, sweetest, sweetner*, 79; *Sweetest* *plaint, sweetest* style, 6; *Sweet* stratagem, *sweet* art, 36; *Sweet* soft *shades*, 98; *Sweet* kiss thy *sweets*, I fain would *sweetly* indite, 79; Thy *lap*, doth *lap*, nay *lets*, 59; *Thank* for a *thankful*, 95; The *chaste* mind hates with *chastened*, 61; The *reins* of *love*, I *love*, 28; That without *touch*, doth *touch*, 9; Then *love* is *sin* and let me *sinful* be, 14; *Think* that I *think*, 23; Thou art most *sweet* *sweet*, 5th Song; Thou bearest the *arrow*, I, the *arrow* head, 65; *Toil* to *tell*, 10; To joys, whose joys, 42; To you to you, 1st Song; What *hope* that *hope*, 35; Whence words not words, 80; Who while they make *love* conquer, conquer

love, 42; Which *souls e'en souls*, 81; *Virtue with virtuous*, 25; *Watered in my wine*, 62; *Will, wit*, 4; *Wonders wonder* do invite, 26; Whose *presence absence, absence presence* is, 60; *Wooded, woe*, 58; *Wooden wits*, 7th Song; *Wisest* scholar of the night most wise, 25; With *wit my wit* is marred, 34; *Wit to wonder*.

BACON'S PROMUS.

Mrs. Pott now reviews Bacon's *Promus*, and gives references to 162 Promus notes, of which it need only be said that they fully prove the method, whereby Mrs. Pott seeks to establish a direct relationship between the Sonnets and Bacon's work, to be wholly untrustworthy and valueless. For example, the first "Promus" note quoted is 488, "Ever spare and ever bare," and the next one 817, "*Cor ne edite*," with a reference for both to the first Sonnet, which, so far as I can see, contains nothing relevant to either! The next "Promus" note is 420, "*Si nunquam fallit imago*," with a reference to three Sonnets, 3, 22, and 62, the only connection between which and the Promus note, is that the word "*glass*" occurs in each, and the word "*imago*" may be translated as an image seen in a "*glass*!" The next "Promus" note is 737, "*Utramque paginam facit an Auditor's booke, of one to whom both good and yll is imputed*." Sonnets 4 and 136 are quoted as bearing on this for the only reason that I can discover, that one contains the word "*Audit*," and the other, the words "*Stores account*," which may in some way, beyond my comprehension, suggest the idea of "*Audit*!" To take a few more at random, "Promus" note 506 reads "*As good never the whit, as never the better*." This Mrs. Pott connects with Sonnet 33, the only link between them being the line. "Yet him for this, my love no *whit* disdained!" Again, "Promus" note 1221, is simply "*Amen*," which word undoubtedly occurs also in Sonnet 85! Equally remarkable is the connection claimed to exist between "Promus" note 729, "*Numerus Eras Adag 429*," and Sonnet 136, wherein this line occurs, "Then in the *number* let me pass untold!" Surely this method of Mrs. Pott in tracing coincidences, too nearly approaches that of Fluellen in the case of *Monmouth* and *Macedon* to merit serious consideration!

Equally infelicitous is the lady's attempt to explain the object of the Sonnets, as she fails to perceive that they are addressed to more persons than one, and of opposite sexes, for which reason alone it is mere waste time to discuss her contention that they were written by Bacon, and were addressed to a personification of his own philosophy. The idea is wholly untenable.

In *Baconiana* for November, 1893 (p. 139), Mr. Burr takes up and enlarges on some of the arguments adopted by

Mrs. Pott and devotes nearly five pages to "*Parallelisms*" between the Sonnets, the Plays, and Bacon's "*Promus*." To most of these the remarks I have already made will apply more or less, but one of the closing sentences deserves special comment. "Many *rare obsolete* and *peculiar* words in the Sonnets are used more or less frequently in the Plays." *For example: *Audit* (5) *Ensconce* (3), *Forsworne* (55), *Highmost* (1), *In faith* (24), *Largess* (4), *Level at* (7), *Minion* (22), *Mouthed* (2), *Niggard* (6), *Preposterously* (4), *Potion* (10), *Quietus* (1), *Razed* (5), *Reeks*, (4), *Scanted* (4), *Alack*, *Outworn*, *Presager*, *Unperfect*, or 20 words in all of which *Audit* alone occurs in the "*Promus*" and the last four do not occur in the Plays at all! Of the remainder, *In faith* occurs 24 times, *Minion* 22 times, *Forsworne* 55 times and *Potion* 10 times, so they can hardly be regarded as "*rare, obsolete, or peculiar*." This reduces the number of words of this class, common to Plays and the Sonnets to twelve, but of these *Audit* occurs three times in Sidney's Poem (Songs 1 and 2 and Stanza 18.) *Niggard* twice in the same Poem (Songs 2 and 4). *Largess* in Sidney's "Defence of Poetry." *Razed* is used by Spencer (F.Q.V. 10. 23) also by Chapman frequently and in Sidney's Poem (36). *Level at*, and *scanted* are both used by Spencer (F.Q.V. 4, 40, and vi., 6, 14.) The argument therefore sought to be drawn from the number of "*rare, obsolete, or peculiar*" words common to Plays and the Sonnets utterly breaks down on close examination.

I now come to the consideration of Mr. R. M. Theobald's paper in "*Baconiana*," of February, 1894 (p. 173), and any statement from so competent a student of Bacon's and Shakespeare's works merits the closest attention. The conclusion arrived at by Mr. R. M. Theobald, is that the writer of the Sonnets was Bacon, and that certain of the Sonnets were addressed to Queen Elizabeth. The reason my cousin adduces for considering the Queen as the object of the adulation expressed in the Sonnets, is thus stated by him (p. 190) "It is difficult to imagine anyone but the Queen, who could at that time have been the cynosure of so many grandiloquent admirers," and of these same "admirers" he thus speaks (p. 187) "The rival poets are *not one but many, quite a company of them*," and in support of this contention, quotes Sonnets 78, 82, 83, 84, and 85, the precise words whereon he relies being:—

"As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee *their* poesy disperse." (78).

and again

"Yet when *they* have devised
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou truly fair, wert truly sympathised

*NOTE.—The number of times these words occur in the Plays is added by myself on the authority of Mrs. Cruden Clerks Concordance.

In true plain words by thy true-telling friend ;
 And *their* gross painting might be better used
 Where cheeks need blood, on thee it is abused." (82).

Now this language does not seem to me of necessity to demand the existence of more than two rival writers, one of whom is the writer's dearest friend, and this fact that the poet's rival was also his dearest friend, may have led to the reproach being softened down by the intentional use of the collective "*their*" in place of the more pointed "*his*," and that this was the case, and the complaint aimed at *one*, rather than at *many*, is proved by the tenor of Sonnet 79 :

"Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid
 My verse alone had all thy gentle grace :
 But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
 And my sick Muse doth give *another* place."

Observe, the expression is "*another*" not *to others*, which would have been used if a *number* of rivals had been glanced at ; indeed the word "*another*" seems to exclude the idea of more than one. The poet continues :

"I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
 Deserves the travail of a worthier pen ;
 Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
He robs thee of and pays it thee again,
He lends thee virtue, and *he* stole that word." (79)

There may be some ambiguity as to whether "*he*" in this passage refers to the speaker or his rival, but the following lines show, I think, that it is the poet's rival who is alluded to, as Sonnets 79 to 86 inclusive are a laboured protest against the encouragement his rival receives.

"O ! how I faint when I of you do write,
 Knowing a *better spirit* doth use your name

* * *

He of tall building and of goodly pride." (80).

All which clearly alludes to a *rival* rather than a "*company*" of rivals ! Then again :

"There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
 Than *both* your poets can in praise devise." (83).

Here "*both*" clearly refers to *two only*, the writer and his rival, and again the rivalry of *one*, not of *many*, is alluded to in Sonnet 86.

"Was it the proud full sail of *his* great verse
 Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you.

* * *

But when your countenance filled up *his* line,
 Then lacked I matter ; that enfeebled *mine*."

Surely in those rhyming days, a beauty or favorite of Society may have been celebrated in verse by more poets than one without being therefore identified with Queen Elizabeth.

It now only remains to consider the three papers by Mr. Stotsenburgh, which advocate the claim of Sir Philip Sidney to be regarded as the writer of the Sonnets.

It is not my intention to recapitulate *in extenso* the arguments by which this view is so conclusively maintained, but accepting it as a working hypothesis to see how far it accords with the facts revealed to us in the Sonnets, and in Sidney's poem of *Astrophel and Stella*.

To reason from the known to the unknown, we will first see what the poem reveals in the way of personal information which can be fitted into the story of the Sonnets, and whether the two works are or are not capable of being connected; and especially if many of the Sonnets are not *complemental to the poem*, and comprise matter which on second thought Sidney determined to exclude therefrom.

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA.

Stella was Penelope Devoreux, loved by Sidney from her youth, which feeling was reciprocal, but the match was broken off by her parents, who married her to Lord Rich, a mean fellow for whom his wife entertained neither love nor respect. Sidney's love was of gradual growth as he tells us:

"Not at first sight, nor with a dribbled shot.
Love gave the wound which while I breathe, will bleed:
I saw and liked, I liked but loved not:
I loved, but straight did not what love decreed." (2).

And so Sidney's backwardness was one cause of his losing his mistress, and when too late to repair his error he has the poor consolation of employing his laggard wit.

"To make myself believe that all is well,
While with a feeling skill I paint my hell." (2).

Stella was that rare type of beauty, a black-eyed blonde, with red and white cheeks, a fair skin, and golden hair, but with black eyes, and very accomplished and clever (Stanzas 7, 8, 9, 13, 77, and 91). Stella's only misfortune was in being "Rich." (37).

In Stella's breast a strife was waged between Virtue and Love. (52).

Stella acquaints Sidney with her love for him, but he tells us:

"I joyed, but straight *thus watered was my wine*:
That love she did, but loved a love not blind,
Which would not let me, whom she loved decline
From nobler course, fit for my birth and mind." (62).

Stella addresses Sidney as "Good brother Philip," but scolds him for his importunity, tartly winding up with "Leave that, Sir Philip, lest off your neck be wrung." (83).

Stella absolutely rejects her lover's sinful suit. (Song 4).

Stella is threatened by her lover for her hard-heartedness. (Song 5).

Stella, unhappily married and sharing her lover's feelings, is passionately wooed to break her marriage vow. (Song 8).

Stella's most loving but *absolute denial of her lover's suit*.

"Astrophel, said she, my love,
Cease in these effects to prove,
Now be still, yet still believe me
Thy grief, more than death would grieve me.

*Trust me while I thee deny,
In myself the smart I try :
Tyrant Honour thus doth use thee,
Stella's self might not refuse thee.*

*Therefore, dear, this no more move,
Lest, though I leave not thy love,
Which in me too deep is framed,
I should blush, when thou art named."* (Song 8).

In fact we have in this charming poem a reproduction in real life of the sad story of Tristram and Ysolde, only without the shadow of Ysolde's sin.

In Song 9 Stella is reproached by her lover, and his own contrition is also expressed for the vexation and humiliation his language has caused her. The parting dialogue between the lovers, beneath Stella's window, is given in the eleventh Song, and Stella is finally described as being as inaccessible as light to a prisoner in a dungeon (108).

And now for the connection between the Poem and the Sonnets.

In the 5th Song her lover threatens Stella with revenge for her disdainful reception of his suit, but adds :

"Threaten what may be done, but do no more than threaten."

and thus he executes his threat :

"Think now no more to hear of warm fine-coloured snow,
No blushing lilies, no pearls ruby-hidden row,
Nor of that golden sea, whose waves in curls are broken."

* * * *

I say thou art a *thief*, a *thief*."

(At this point his anger dies down for a moment)

"Now God forbid" (but recovering himself he goes on)
A *thief* and of *worst thieves* the chief !
Yet gentle English thieves do rob, but will not slay,
Thou English murdering thief will hearts have for thy prey :
You witch, you devil (alas) you still of me beloved,
You see what I can say, mend you your froward mind.
And such, shall in my Muse, you reconciled, find
That all these cruel words your praises shall be proved."

So much for the poem ; in the *Sonnets however we shall see the threat carried out very completely :*

"My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun ;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red :
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun ;
If hairs be wires, black hairs grow on her head ;
I have seen roses damasked red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks." (130).

For what possible end could this disdainful Sonnet have been written, or by whom but Sidney ? Who can doubt that this was a Sonnet struck out of Sidney's Poem, ere its completion, as it must be remembered that the Poem as finally allowed to stand by its author, terminates in a manner honourable to both parties, and devoid of all scorn and bitterness. The Poem indeed, constitutes a charming autobiographic retrospect of a mutual passion, from which all discordant or unworthy ingredients have been carefully eliminated, and for these we must *look among the Sonnets*. Astrophel, who writes them, is *there*, Stella is *there*, and the third person is *there*, who caused such a tempest in the lives of the lovers, and whom I fully concur with Mr. Stotsenburgh in identifying with Sir Edward Dyer. In the Sonnets, Stella is clearly to be recognised as the disdainful lady with black eyes.

"Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black" (127)

and again

"Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners be
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain." (132)

These words sufficiently identify the lady of the Sonnets with Stella, but it must be remembered that most of the Sonnets addressed to his mistress were written under the impulse of a cruel jealousy, and we accordingly miss the catalogue of her beauties which we encounter in the poem, in place of which we find such passages as these :

"For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as Hell, as dark as Night." (147)

and again

"For I have sworn thee fair, more perjured I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie." (152)

These words certainly fulfil the angry lover's threat, but for this very reason they came, eventually, to be expunged from the Poem, to find a resting place in the limbo of the Sonnets.

The Sonnets, as I am inclined to divide them, fall naturally into two groups, one group addressed by Sidney, to his friend Dyer, No. 1 to 39, and 41 to 126 ; and another group addressed to Stella, No. 40 and 127 to 152.

Sonnet 144 is the key of the "argument" of the Sonnets themselves:

"Two loves I have, of COMFORT and DESPAIR,
The better Angel is a *man*, right fair;
The worse spirit a *woman*, coloured ill.
To win me soon to Hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better Angel from my side,
And would corrupt my Saint to be a devil." (144)

Now who can this man be, but the writer's bosom friend, Sir Edward Dyer, and the writer's dear love, Stella? To identify the man however, we must leave the "*jealousy*" group of Sonnets and revert to the "*Dyer*" group, for the portrait of the "*better Angel*:"

"A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the Master Mistress of my passion.
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false woman's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth:
A man in hue all hues in his controlling."

Now this line, it cannot reasonably be questioned, very neatly veils the name of Sir Edward *Dyer*, who with Fulke Greville, formed the brotherhood of whom Sir Philip Sidney wrote:

"My two and I be met, a happy blessed Trinity,
As three more jointly set, in firmest bonds of Unity.
And as the turtle dove to mate with whom he liveth,
Such comfort fervent love of you to my heart giveth."

Again in his "Dispraise of a Courtly Life," Sidney thus speaks of these two friends of his:

"Only for my two loves' sake
In whose love I pleasure take,
Only two do me delight
With their ever pleasing sight,
Of all such to thee retaining, (Pan)
Grant me with those two remaining."

Now in the Sonnets we have the same passionate love expressed by the writer for a man who is covertly alluded to by a play on his name, "*a man all hues controlling*," that is a *dyer*, and by piecing together Sonnets 35, 40, and 41, we find that this friend of the writer had committed the treason of allowing himself to fall captive to the fascinations of his (the writer's) life-long idol. For all that, the writer pardons the culprits, so great is his love for them, both his "*love of comfort*," (Dyer) and his "*love of despair*" (Stella), in fact the most severe thing he can say of his friend (Dyer) is the reproachful line wrung from him even in the same breath he pardons the offender (or supposed offenders).

"Ah me! but yet thou mightest my seat forbear." (41)

Of course this was written when Sidney was tortured with jealousy of his dearest friend, but whether as the result of his

complete forgiveness of the "amiss" of both his "loves," or that he ultimately concluded his fears were groundless, no trace of this temporary cloud is allowed to appear in the Poem, published in 1591.

Let us now consider Sonnet 40:

"Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all,
What hast thou then more than thou had'st before?
No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call;
All mine was thine before thou had'st this more;
Then if for my love, thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;
But yet be blamed, if thou thyself deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth.
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
And yet love knows it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury;
Lascivious grace in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites, yet we must not be foes." (40)

This is a remarkable Sonnet in many respects, and a good example of *Sidney's peculiar style*, crammed as it is with alliterative and antithetical phrases. Gerald Massey ingeniously maintains that this Sonnet is addressed by Elizabeth Vernon to Lady Rich (Stella), who had enticed her affianced husband, the Earl of Southampton, from her, but the last line, I think, disproves Massey's contention, as it is incredible a woman should so express herself to her rival, after she had alienated the affection of the writer's affianced husband, who was, moreover, the father of her unborn child! The thing is impossible, even allowing all weight to Massey's explanation, that *political considerations* forbade hostility between them! Then again, how could Elizabeth Vernon, anxiously awaiting her already too-long deferred marriage, offer *her loves* (by the armful, as it were) to Lady Rich!

"Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all."

Who, I would ask, are *all these loves*, whom Elizabeth Vernon is ready to offer Lady Rich, in return for her affianced husband, if Massey's suggestion is correct? On the other hand, the words "*take all my loves*" are not inappropriate or unintelligible in the mouth of Sidney, if his friend Dyer was aimed at, and we understand "all" to be used in the sense of *both*, meaning Dyer and Greville, "*my two*" my all, as they might be called, after the hyperbolic fashion Sidney constantly adopts when speaking of them.

Then again, what point or even sense is there in the line

"By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth"

in the mouth of Elizabeth Vernon? Here, however, the Poem explains the Sonnet, and everything is clear, if Sidney is addressing Stella, as then the line may be thus paraphrased:

"What wilfulness is it not in you (Stella), to give my friend (Dyer) favours you have time and again refused to me"—and truly the complaint was not unreasonable. The last lines too, if addressed by Sidney to Stella, are quite in accordance with the powerful chains with which he was bound, the full consciousness of which is thus expressed in Sidney's Poem :

"O ! let not fools in me thy works repose,
And scorning say 'see what it is to love.'"

Ingenious therefore, as Massey's suggestion is, I still consider a more natural explanation is afforded by regarding Sidney as the writer.

Let us now consider Sonnets, 41 and 42 :

"Those petty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometimes absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
For still temptation follows where thou art.
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed
And when a woman woos what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she hath prevailed ?
Ah me ! But yet thou might'st my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a two-fold truth,
Her's by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine by thy beauty being false to me." (41).

Now who is the writer in this case, a man or a woman ? Gerald Massey contends this remonstrance is addressed by Elizabeth Vernon to her affianced husband, whereas I hold it is clearly addressed by Sidney to his "love," Sir Edward Dyer. Supposing Elizabeth Vernon is writing to the Earl of Southampton with reference to his relations to Lady Rich, what possible sense can be made of the words, "Ah me ! but yet thou might'st *my seat* forbear," Elizabeth Vernon would hardly call either Lady Rich's lap or her heart, her, (the writer's) seat ! But if it is Sidney who thus addresses Dyer, the words are clear enough. "*My seat*" in that case means Sidney's place in Stella's heart, which Sidney reproaches Dyer with seeking to appropriate. But it is from the next Sonnet, perhaps, that the question of who is speaking, a man or woman, can be best answered :

"That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly ;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye ;
Thou dost love her, because thou knowest I love her,
And for *my sake* even so doth she *abuse me*,
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I love thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And loving her my friend hath found that loss.
Both find each other and I love both twain,
And both for *my sake* lay on me this cross :
But here's the joy, my friend and I are one.
Sweet flattery ! then she loves but me alone." (42).

Here we are on firm ground, for this Sonnet could only have been written by a man, for the line "*suffering my friend for my sake to approve her*," is absolutely unintelligible, or rather nonsense, if spoken by a woman to her triumphant rival, but it receives a remarkable light from Sidney's Poem, for the 11th Song exhibits a sort of garden scene and final dialogue between the lovers, where Stella says :

"But the *wrongs*, love bears will make
Love at length cease undertaking."

This means that "her (Stella's) disdain of Sidney's suit, not to mention the favour she (Stella) might show to others, would end in curing Sidney of his unfortunate passion for herself." To this Sidney replies :

"No ; the more fools it doth shake,
In a ground of so firm making
Deeper still they drive the stake."

In the Sonnets we see what happened—and (as I judge it possible even) that Stella had applied (as suggested in the Poem) her own cure for her lover's passion, by exciting his jealousy, *for his sake*, and Sidney no less proved the correctness of his reply as above, by forgiving both these "*loving offenders*" who had become such *for his sake ; which last sentence is intelligible under no other supposition than that here suggested*. The objection might be raised to Dyer being regarded as the male friend or "love" of the writer of the Sonnets wherein he is thus addressed :

"O thou, my lovely boy" (126), as Dyer was fourteen years older than Sidney ; but what are years in the case of so passionate a bond as that which united Sidney and his "love," for the writer distinctly says :

"To me, fair friend, *you never can be old*,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed
Such seems your beauty still." (104).

This answer is, I think, complete to any such objection as above.

Another objection (as at first sight it might appear) lies in that, so far as the evidence goes of him who certainly should know best, the lady's lover, Stella was a blameless wife, whereas in the Sonnets, Stella, or the heroine, is reproached in almost inhuman terms for her infidelity (152) ; but the Sonnets were composed when the mind of the writer was racked with jealousy and viewed his love through a jaundiced medium.

It was from failing to appreciate this, as well as from not perceiving that the lady of the Sonnets was identical with "Stella" of Sidney's Poem, that my cousin, Mr. R. M. Theobald, was unable to apprehend the sense of Sonnet 142, as in *Baconiana* for 1894, p. 182, he thus expresses himself :

"What for instance can be made of such a couplet as this?"

"If thou does seek to have, what thou dost hide,
By self-example may'st thou be denied."

At first sight this looks enigmatical enough I admit, *but read in connection with Sidney's Poem all is clear and intelligible.* The object Stella is here supposed to seek is the love of Dyer, but as Stella had rejected the suit of Sidney, for Honour's sake, the aggrieved lover very pertinently observes that by her own example or rule she should be denied by Dyer. The whole couplet is very happy and applicable if we only rightly apprehend the situation and the persons to whom it applied. All that needs changing in Stella's answer to Sidney, is the name of Stella and the substitution in its place of Dyer:

"Tyrant Honour doth thus use thee
Dyer's self might not refuse thee." (Song 8).

The honour in one case being a wife's loyalty to a husband; in the other, a friend's loyalty to a dear friend. Thus in the phrase "*self-example*," which my cousin regarded as so obscure, we really find the clearest indication that it is Sidney who is the writer of the Sonnet, and Stella, adorable Stella who is being addressed.

Another Sonnet which clearly indicates Sidney as the writer is No. 141, which ends thus:

"Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin awards me pain."

This is absolutely true of the relations of Sidney and Lady Rich, and the next Sonnet is equally suggestive:

"Love is my sin, and thy dear Virtue hate;
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving."

Here again is a statement, true in every particular of the relations subsisting between Sidney and Stella. The Lady's lover however at once again falls into his old "lunes" and begins to argue:

"O but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shall find it merits not reproving;
Or if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments,
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robbed other's bed's revenues of their rents." (142).

Here again is a clear setting forth of the truth as regards the lovers, and the loveless marriages of both of them, both having "*sealed false bonds of love*" at the altar. That "Stella" had married a man she cared not two straws for was an open secret, and that Sidney had done not much better he himself tells us in his Poem.

"Even so, alas! a lady Dian's peer
With choice delights and rarest company,
Would fain drive clouds from out my heavy cheer:
But woe is me! though joy itself wore she,
She could not show my blind brain ways of joy;
While I despair my sun's sight to enjoy." (97).

This lady was of course his wife, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, and her husband's tribute to her virtues is the more commendable as it is clear his heart was alone possessed by Stella. A previous stanza, however, shows there was a rift in the conjugal lute, though it must be admitted a wife were more than human if some expression of impatience did not escape her under the conditions she was placed in. It is of course the wife who is addressing her husband Sidney :-

"Be your words made, Good Sir, of Indian ware
That you allow me them by so small rate?
Or do you curted Spartans imitate?
Or do you mean my tender ears to spare,
That to my questions you so total are?
When I demand of Phoenix-Stella's state,
You say forsooth you left her well of late:
O God! think you that satisfies my ear?
I would know whether she do sit or walk?
How clothed? How waited on? Sighed she or smiled?
Whereof? With whom? How often did she talk?
With what pastime Time's journey she beguiled?
If her lips designed to sweeten my poor name?
Say all, and all well said still say the same." (92).

Poor lady! She deserved a better fate, who, though advanced in pregnancy, hurried to nurse her husband on his lingering death-bed at Arnheim, whose only fault was that he lacked the power to command his own truant heart, though all the while recognising the claims of her to whom it properly belonged.

Few Sonnets have been more commented on than 135 and 136. My cousin, Mr. R. M. Theobald, holds them to have been written by Bacon to Queen Elizabeth, but not only are they too audaciously worded for this to be possible, but the writer distinctly says his name is "Will."

"Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lovest me, *for my name is Will.*" (136).

Now Bacon was never known as Will, whereas Sidney was so known, and is so spoken of by Spencer in the "Tears of the Muses," published in 1591.

"Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late."

Moreover there is another ground for supposing these Sonnets to be addressed by Sidney to Lady Rich, if we only employ the Poem to interpret them by.

The first Sonnet begins:

"Whoever hath her wish, thou hast *thy Will*,
And *Will* to boot and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I, that *rex thee still*,
To thy sweet will making addition thus."

Now in these lines we may perceive a covert allusion, clothed in that *punning* and *alliteration* which Sidney so much affected, to relations subsisting between Stella and Sidney, for Stella had given her lover plainly to understand that though she had all the wish to grant his suit, yet "*Tyrant Honour*"

had forced her *will* to refuse it, which *will* she had enforced, in Sidney's opinion, more than enough.

The Sonnet continues :

"So thou being *rich* in will"

Here again, is the old pun of the Poem on Stella's name.

Then again, the next Sonnet begins :

"If thy soul checks thee that I come *so near*"

This "*so near*" is what Lady M. W. Montague describes as "*too near*."

"He comes too near, who comes to be denied"

which is exactly what Sidney had done.

Gerald Massey interprets these Sonnets quite differently, and argues that Sonnets 127, 132, 135, 143, 57, 58, and 145 to 154 were written by Shakespeare, for William Herbert, whose name William fits well enough, but Massey frankly confesses that he can offer no explanation *why they should have been written*. "*It is perfectly impossible that these Sonnets could have won or wooed the person so addressed. They could not have promoted any love suit.*" Well may Massey renounce in despair the attempt to fathom their "*perplexing purpose*," though if we regard them as addressed by Sidney to Stella, they are not so "*perplexing*" by any means. Massey then devotes pages on pages to prove the intimate connection between the Sonnets of Shakespeare and the writings of Sidney with "*Astrophel and Stella*," and the "*Arcadia*," and adds "*The theme of both Poets is identical in each instance, and both themes were Sidney's first.*" It is marvellous how nearly Massey hit on the truth here, but the glamour of a tradition which has so long misled the world, misguided him, causing him to overlook the real author in favour of one, who so far from being able to write either the Sonnets or Plays, was an illiterate vulgarian, scarcely able to sign his own name, and is not, by any evidence, known to have written a line besides !

To return, however, to the key Sonnet, 144.

"And whether that my Angel be turned fiend,
Suspect I may yet not directly tell,
But seeing both from me both to each friend,
I guess one Angel in another's hell.
Yet this shall I ne'er know but live in doubt
Till my bad Angel fire my good one out." (144)

Now in this Sonnet we have the key, or indeed the very *raison d'être* of many of the Sonnets, expressly set forth. This was the doubt in the writer's mind, whether his friend Dyer, his *alter ego*, his second self, and his darling Stella were really guilty of disloyalty to himself or no. This doubt at last prevailed to such an extent, as to result in his cutting out all traces of jealousy from his noble Poem, and relegating what he had written under its impulse to the anonymous limbo of the Sonnets, which do not appear to have been published

with the consent, or possibly even the knowledge of their author. Gerald Massey, however, takes a very different view of this Sonnet, which he conceives to be a soliloquy of Elizabeth Vernon. This is a plain issue. Is it a *man* or a *woman* who is speaking? Sidney, we know, had two loves, "Dyer" and "Stella," and undoubtedly the Sonnet would correctly express his feelings respecting them when actuated by jealousy. But Massey holds it was a woman who was speaking, and his proof is more ingenious than convincing, and consists in the *assumption* that the Sonnet must be interpreted according to the rules of "*the then familiar game of barley-break*." This is a pure assumption remember, and as for the game being a familiar one (though I by no means seek to deny it), not a single allusion to it occurs through the Plays or Sonnets, unless the present instance constitutes an exception. Barley-break was a sort of "prisoner's base," played by three couples, with three bases, the middle one of which was called "*Hell*." Now Massey argues that as the *writer* complains of the theft of the writer's *good angel*, who was a man, by a *bad angel*, who was a *woman*, the writer must be a woman herself, as each couple was made up of a man and a woman. The argument is conclusive if we can dispose of two objections, the first being that the reference to the rules of Barley-break is a pure assumption, justified alone by the exigencies of Massey's theory; and secondly, Massey thus quotes the law of the game (p. 135), from Sidney's *Arcadia*, without perceiving how completely it upsets his argument!

"To Hell he goes and *Nous* with him must dwell;
Nous swore it was not right for *his* default,
 Who would be caught, that *she* must go to Hell
 But so she must."

Now applying that law, here laid down, as soon as the writer's good angel was safely lodged in "*Hell*," the writer (Elizabeth Vernon, according to Massey's theory), would have had to join him there, *as poor Nous had to join her partner*, but how then could the writer lament that *she* did not know what was passing between her good angel, and her rival Lady Rich, when she was bound by the laws of the game to keep them company? The theory of Elizabeth Vernon being the writer is therefore clearly contradicted by the very evidence Massey adduces in its support.

Again, the words "I guess an angel in another's Hell" cannot be explained by the laws of Barley-break. The Barley-break "*Hell*" is a term of locality to which an adjective implying a possessive sense does not apply. It was not *another's hell* if Barley-break was in view, for it belonged to no one in particular, but might be tenanted by all, neither could there be any guessing as to what went on there, when all were located there together. Having thus, I think, disposed

of Massey's contention, that the writer was a woman, I may suggest that the term "*Hell*" is here used in the somewhat ungallant sense it is used in by Boccaccio in one of his *freest** stories as a metaphor for a woman, and in this sense it is also used in Sonnet 129.

"All this the world well knows: yet none knows well
To shun the Heaven that *leads men to this Hell*."

Sonnets 123, 124, and 125, are regarded by Massey as written by the Earl of Southampton, after his marriage with Elizabeth Vernon, and while a prisoner in the Tower. If Massey is correct in this supposition, they refer to events which did not occur till after the death of Sidney, so that his claim to their authorship would be out of the question; but is this supposition correct? Massey's words are "The speaker being identified as Southampton, who had at last married Elizabeth Vernon, in spite of the Queen and in defiance of all State Policy, we know how the matter stood historically. The marriage was only effected just in time to make his child legitimate. If he had not done what he has done, and now rejoices over having done; if he had not defied the Queen and her Policy, his child would have been a bastard born." (p. 205). All this may be true, but how is it deduced from or connected with the Sonnet.

"If my *dear love* were but the child of state,
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfathered."

Now as I read these lines it does not seem necessary to regard the writer's *dear love* as the writer's mistress at all, as the word *it* (used in the place of *she*) clearly demonstrates, and if not addressed to a mistress, then Elizabeth Vernon vanishes from the scene. It was a marked peculiarity of Sidney's style to personify inanimate objects or qualities (See Stotsenburgh, p. 43), as for example from the Poem. ABSENCE "Traitor Absence, darest thou counsel me" (88). "NATURE, step-dame of the senses" (7 Song). NIGHT, "Dian that fain would cheer *her friend the night*" (97). "INVENTION, Nature's Child" (2). "REASON, thou kneel'st and offered'st to prove" (10). "SORROW kills his own children" (95). "Sorrow melts down his lead" (108). VIRTUE, "Queen Virtue's Court" (9). STUDY, "Step-dame of Invention" (2). WOE, "Fit for Woe's self to groan" (57), and many more from his "Arcadia" might be quoted. In this passage too, the words "*my dear love*," I take to refer to his own passion for Stella, personified, and not to his mistress herself, and this entirely obviates any recondite reference to Elizabeth Vernon. The sentiment expressed may be thus paraphrased. "If that dear passion of mine were only a child of State, based on

* Story of Rustico

interested calculations, it might well be deemed Fortune's bastard rather than a child of mine, being but the offspring of occasion and circumstances, but "*no, it was builded far from accident.*" There is therefore no truth in Massey's assertion with which he clinches his argument. "*Only Southampton could speak of his love being the child of State,*" and his child, a "*bastard of Fortune.*"

The following Sonnet, 125, is equally obscure, but ends with these lines:

"Hence thou suborned informer! A true soul
When most impeached stands least in thy control."

Massey considers the "*informer*" to be Lord Monteagle, and if Southampton was the author it might be so, but the lines are no evidence thereof. It is all guess-work. To whom, however, it may be asked could the phrase "*informer*" apply, on the supposition that Sidney was the writer? The words themselves supply no clue, but from the known relations of Sidney and Lady Rich and the jealousy of her husband, it is very possible that the sentence refers to some mean-spirited fellow employed by Lord Rich as a spy on his wife. This suggestion receives support from the closing lines in the garden scene in Sidney's Poem (11 Song), where Stella says:

"Peace! I think *that some give ear:*
Come no more lest I get anger."

and again

"Well, begone, begone I say,
Lest that Argus' eyes perceive you."

to which Sidney replies:

"O unjust is Fortune's sway!
Which can make me thus to leave you
Aud from louts to run away."

One of these "*louts*," an emissary of Lord Rich, if not Lord Rich himself, is quite as likely to be intended, as the nobleman suggested by Massey!

There is still Sonnet 107 to be considered, which Massey holds to have been written by Southampton, and to refer to the death of Elizabeth. Massey considers this Sonnet to be misplaced where it stands (in the Dyer group), and if this was written by Southampton it must be regarded as wholly unconnected with the other Sonnets, so far as authorship goes, as the proofs that Sidney was the author of the majority are too strong to be set aside because a few Sonnets not of his composition have been included among them.

It is a very plausible suggestion of Massey's that the words

"*The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured*"

refer to the death of Queen Elizabeth, and the words "*The lease of my true love, supposed as forfeit to a confined doom,*"

to the imprisonment of Elizabeth Vernon by the Queen; but there is still an explanation of them not incompatible with their having been written by Sidney. It so happens that Sidney's Poem affords a similar instance of political allusion thoroughly out of harmony with the surrounding matter, where the power of Turkey is alluded to under the allegory of the Moon:

"Whether the Turkish new-moon minded be
To fill his horns this year on Christian coast" (30)

The "*mortal moon*" may after all therefore only allude to the Turkish power, which had suffered a temporary shock or "*eclipse*" which had set every political *quid nunc* speculating, and the "*confined doom*" of his love (meaning his passion for his mistress not his mistress herself), may allude to the marriage of his mistress to a rival, and the consequent extinction, so to say, of his suit. But the authorship of this obscure Sonnet is not very material to the main issue.

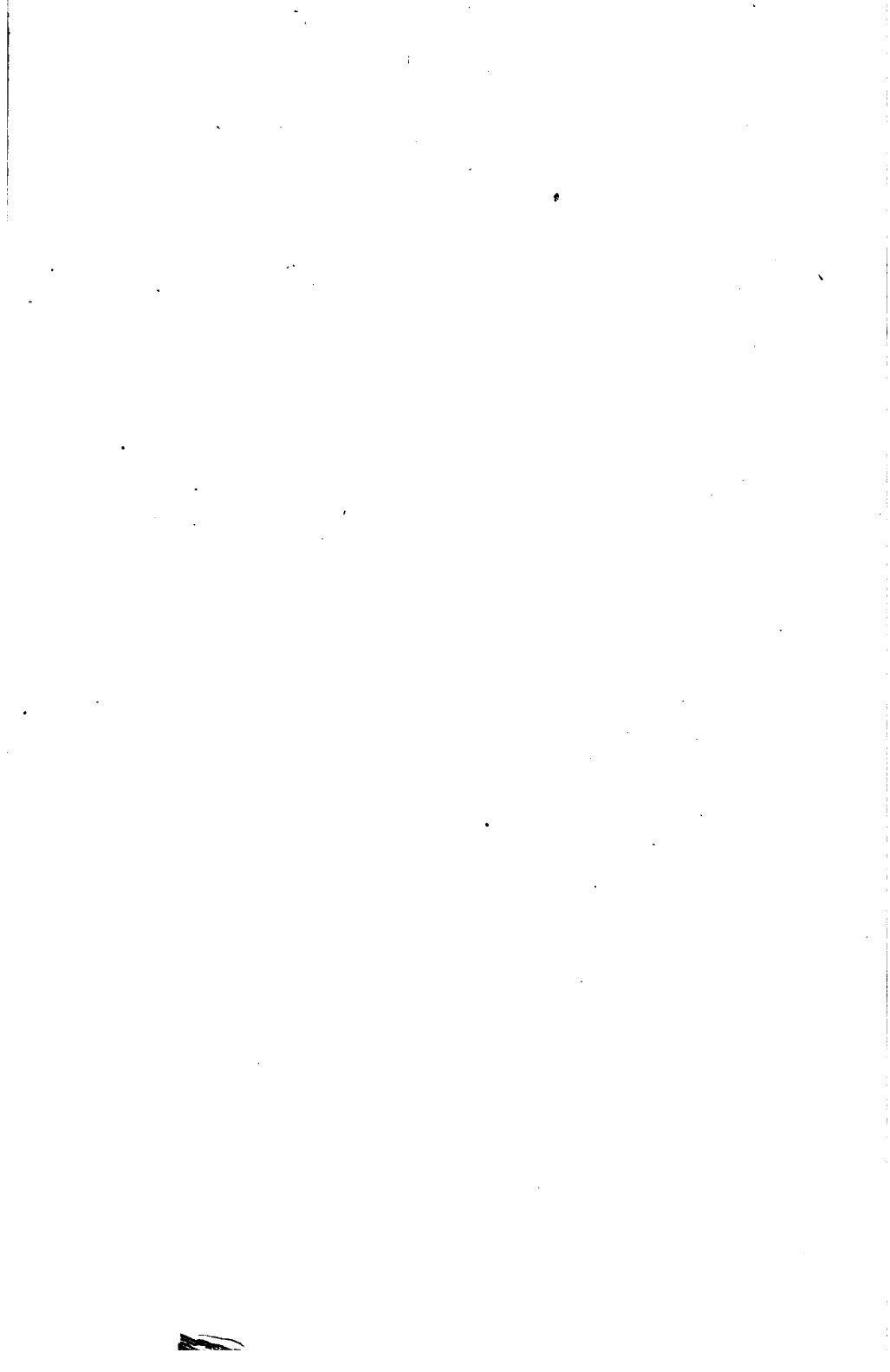
One of the arguments which Mr. Massey uses in support of his theory that certain of the Sonnets are addressed by the Earl of Southampton, to Elizabeth Vernon, may be termed the *Apology* argument, contained in Sonnet 122, in which Massey supposes Southampton to apologise to his mistress for giving away a book given to him by her, but there is really nothing in the language of the Sonnet inconsistent with the idea of its being addressed by Sidney, to his friend Dyer. Besides "*thy gift*" is specified to be "*thy tables within my brain*," which Massey clearly shows are the pictured lineaments of the writer's love (that is Dyer) "*charactered*" that is described in writing (that is in the Sonnets), and it is to the circulation of such Sonnets among private friends that the apology contained in the Sonnet points—and to which circulation we owe the publication of these and productions of a like nature by some enterprising publishers, under the *nom de plume* of that vulgar but astute appropriator of other men's work, Shakespeare!—Of this opinion was clearly the author of "Our English Homer," Mr. White, who thus expresses himself on the point. "*It is of course superfluous to point out that nothing in these Sonnets bears any affinity to the vulgar uneducated player of the Blackfriar and Globe Theatres.*"

The strongest argument in favour of the Sonnets having been written by Sir Philip Sidney, lies in the fact that to whomsoever else they may be attributed, there always remains in that case an unnegotiable *residuum* of Sonnets, sentences and ambiguities, capable of no rational interpretation whatever, whereas in Sidney's case these very ambiguities become a conclusive argument in his favour, as they completely accord with a personal, albeit transient, phase of his history and of his personal relations to his adorable Stella. This all-important *residuum* embraces all the Sonnets (which have so gravelled

the critics), written in abuse of his mistress, viz. : Nos. 129, 130, 131, 137, 138, 144, 147, 148, 150, and 152, whose aim it is impossible to surmise, save when read in connection with the jealousy Sidney once felt respecting his dear mistress and no less dear friend. Sonnets 41 and 42 belong to the same category, and are alone explicable on the supposition that they were written by Sidney when his jealousy of his friend Dyer was at its height. Well may the shade of Sidney exclaim :

“Hos ego versiculos feci ; tulit alter honores.”





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